

The Christian

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Edited by
KATHLEEN
BLISS

News-Letter

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WE WISH ALL OUR READERS a Happy Christmas. These words will be used many times. They can be tossed off with the lightness of a "Good morning", or they can be a profound wish that the hearer may enter into the experience of what Christmas happiness means. Some of our readers who file their C.N-L.s may like to look back to No. 61 and re-read the Supplement which William Temple wrote for the Christmas number of the News-

Letter in 1940. He called it "Not in the News". He said that not only was the birth of Jesus unknown, it was unknowable, and then he went on, "Now—can we get this into our nearly impenetrable heads? Hardly anything that is recorded in the newspapers is ever of first-rate importance. Because the things of first-rate importance are spiritual events which are known only by their results. Some of them are, of course, really important, but each is always less important than the spiritual event which is the source of them all. The most alert and intrusive of reporters could never have hit upon that stable as the scene of a world-shaking event. . . . Of course *we* recognize it now. Oh, do we? Even on the showing of our own profession we convict ourselves. We say all the great phrases about the thing that happened long ago; and those phrases declare that it was not a past episode but an eternal fact. What happened once in that obscure

NEWS-LETTER

CHRISTMAS

THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN
INDIA AND PAKISTAN

SUPPLEMENT

CHRISTMAS 1947

By

BISHOP STEPHEN NEILL

but turbulent corner of the Roman Empire is always happening ; and no one knows it is happening. We can't know how or where ; but we might try to believe that it is going on somewhere."

For millions of people all over the world 1947 will be a harder Christmas than 1940, and for many thousands more, whose lot does not include living in a damp cellar in Hamburg or in a refugee camp in the Punjab, life contains nothing on which hopes may be fixed, nothing which lights up the future as the simple words " the end of the war " lit up the six years of struggle and made every hardship seem worth while. Is " the Dayspring from on high " somewhere in the world visiting humankind again ? If so, it is only those of us who have learned, in the words of the well-known prayer, " to look away from ourselves to the hopes and needs of others ", who are likely to see his light, and only those who have revolutionized their estimation of what is important in the world who can know his coming. Looked at in the mass the sum total of human suffering in the world at this present time is enough to stultify the imagination and paralyse the will. Yet the true spirit of human compassion is not intimidated by the magnitude of the sorrow and suffering. It leaps to meet impossible tasks and to shoulder burdens which might well be thought intolerable.

RELIEF OF REFUGEES IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

We propose to devote the rest of this News-Letter to news about what is being done for the uncounted millions of refugees who have fled across the boundaries between India and Pakistan, particularly in the newly divided province of Punjab. West Punjab with its capital of Lahore, the old capital, now falls in Pakistan. East Punjab belongs to India. The undivided province of Punjab had a Mohammedan majority, but it was also the historic home of the Sikhs who equally with Mohammedans can look back to a time of dominion. In addition there were considerable Hindu minorities in Punjab. All the conditions for a violent flare-up were therefore present on August 15th when British rule formally came to an end. In September an

entirely unforeseen disaster overwhelmed a large area of the Punjab. The Sutlej river burst its banks and a roaring tide of water eight feet deep swept through the city of Ferozepur and over the surrounding countryside in the worst flood for fifty years. At the mission hospital in the city two hundred persons—patients and medical and other staff—spent a night and a day on the roof while the water swept through the other floors, and all around were the cries of the drowning and the crash of falling buildings. In the havoc, killing and looting broke out. “But”, says the National Christian Council’s report of what happened, “there were also many heartening things. People who had not been affected came and offered help and shelter, particularly the Christians of a village eight miles away, who came through the water bringing tools and food. No one called them and no one paid them, but they just came and pitched into back-breaking work of digging and clearing and stayed three days—a never-to-be-forgotten service.”

On the top of this and spreading much further than the flood came the flight of millions of refugees, the attacks on trains and on moving columns of refugees, the looting and burning of shops and houses, the slaughter of whole families, the herding of great companies in refugee camps where disease was a constant menace. Before we proceed to give some account of what is now being done to cope with this immense migration of populations, we should like to quote a letter sent to the News-Letter by Dr. Edmund Lucas, an American missionary with many years’ experience in India, who is now Director of Relief Work for the National Christian Council of India. He is describing his tour of reconnaissance in October and November, when relief work on the spot both by hospitals in the areas and by teams coming in from elsewhere had already begun. Mr. Lucas wrote :—

“It had taken us three and a half days by air to go from New York to Calcutta, and we flew on to New Delhi. We could see from time to time whole areas just emerging from the waters that had spread over river banks. In New

Delhi we began to experience one of the great changes that had overtaken and almost overwhelmed northern India. Transportation except by air, and communication except by airmail, had all but broken down. No trains except refugee and military, no buses or lorries except for moving refugees, no private cars except with special permits and priorities from government, moved north of Delhi towards the East Punjab or out of Lahore towards the north and west.

"The East Punjab Government was itself a refugee government with no capital, no offices, no secretariat, no host of clerks and peons awaiting the master's call. Everything has had to be built up from scratch. With transport and communications gone, refugees jamming in or fleeing out, floods raging through the lowlands, and fear and pestilence spreading everywhere, the Government was at its wit's end. That the Governments of both India and Pakistan are functioning here as well as they are is a miracle.

"A few days later the tragedy of the Punjab struck us head-on. We visited two Muslim Refugee Camps under the Central Government of India at Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb, in East Punjab. Purana Qila covers about ten or twelve acres and has rows of cells running around the inside walls like a caravanserai. These cells and the central courtyard were packed with seventy to eighty thousand refugees. Groups of from ten to twenty occupied little lean-to's that were not more than 10 ft by 10 ft. The stench was appalling. Barbed wire stockades ran around outside the walls, enclosing open fields. At the gates Hindu soldiers with rifles-at-the-ready inspected our pass. At the main entrance and inside some twenty or thirty British Tommies looked grimly cheerful. Our Relief Unit had set up a maternity ward and had delivered scores of babies. We watched whole-wheat flour being doled out to heads of families at the rate of five ounces per adult and half that for children under twelve to last them for twenty-four hours. Many looked half starved. All looked as if stunned and only half awake to what had befallen them. Humayun's Tomb had about 50,000 and was not so crowded or smelly.

"On October 16th Mr. Schrag of the Mennonite Relief

Committee and I left Delhi on the Grand Trunk Road to Ambala which lies 122 miles to the north, still in East Punjab. For over 100 miles the only signs of life were not infrequent road blocks where a dozen or so soldiers held up all traffic until satisfied that one had a permit to pass. Fields were empty of men and cattle. The countryside seemed smothered under a pall of fear. Muslims shut themselves up in their villages with their cattle, and Hindus likewise did not seem to trust the gangs of Sikh ruffians who had spread murder, arson and loot throughout the Eastern Punjab north of Ambala.

“At Kurukshetra a great Hindu-Sikh refugee camp was being opened, and on that Thursday afternoon, October 16th, held about 20,000 refugees from the Canal Colonies. They were in much better shape than the Muslim refugees we had seen. They came from a far higher and more prosperous economic group. The Canal Colonies used to hold the most prosperous farming group to be found anywhere in India. At Ambala, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Kasur I saw large Muslim refugee camps with conditions very similar to those seen at the Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb.

“We spent October 18-22 in Lahore. About one-third of the walled city with over 100,000 dwellers has been destroyed by arson and small bombs or grenades. The entire block of buildings, formerly occupied by the Daya Nand Anglo-Vedic College, the Arya Samaj High School and the Aggarwal Ashram in the Civil Station, was a sad looking sight, for it had been occupied for weeks by from ten to thirty thousand Hindu-Sikh refugees. The Pakistan Government, probably through sheer inability, had not supplied fuel, salt or sugar with the eight or ten ounces of ‘ata’ (whole-wheat flour) given to each adult refugee. So all tables, chairs, even doors, windows and cupboard shelves had been chopped up as a substitute for fuel. Salt and sugar were smuggled in at black market prices by those who could pay. The grounds of the College with flower beds and lawns were completely churned into mire or packed into bare, hard earth. Along the Mall (the Strand of Lahore) every second or third shop was padlocked, awaiting a government inventory, resale and re-opening under Muslim direction. Except for a dozen Sikh soldiers of the Dogra bat-

talion guarding the refugees, not another Sikh was left and I saw in four days less than half a dozen Hindus, who were under special protection. Jinnah has got his wish more completely than he had perhaps counted on. Banks are not functioning; government offices, post offices, telegraph and telephone, railway offices and stations and shops have been stripped of their most competent employees. The Government has the blind staggers.

"We left Lahore for Amritsar, a city still more changed for the worse. Less than two years ago it was a veritable hive of industry and commerce. Of its 700,000 people one-third were Muslim. Now not a Muslim is found outside the refugee camps and moving columns making for Pakistan—a broken, half-famished horde which will burden the West Punjab for years. Here the damage is more extensive and thorough and a strange feeling of uneasiness broods over the city where such appalling and beastly crimes have been committed in the name of religion. How can the Sikhs ever recover their own self-respect until they have repented of the evil which rose to such a pitch in their Holy City? Dr. Snow at the C.E.Z.M.S. Hospital, Dr. Morton (both lady doctors), the American Mennonite team of nurses and Indian Christian nurses were ministering at the Muslim refugee camp. Hundreds were served at the dispensary as I watched.

"In Jullundur City we saw the East Punjab provincial Government beginning to pick up and make a pattern of the many threads of government control and service. It was a herculean task, and as I talked with some of the leading officials I felt sure that they were bringing every ounce of determination and energy to cope with it. Muslim villages all around Jullundur had been completely evacuated and were being refilled with Hindu and Sikh refugees. Jullundur is known as the Garden of North India, but the beautifully kept vegetable, strawberry and fruit gardens were open, barren, dusty fields. The long rows of metal working shops along the main line railway entering Jullundur from the North were deserted as the workers had been almost cent per cent Muslims.

"One came back to Delhi infinitely sadder and full of apprehension as one heard on both sides of the new frontier

the same fears, suspicions and hatreds which had caused this unspeakable tragedy.

“ On October 25th I shared in a meeting of ‘ The United Council of Relief and Welfare ’ organized by Lady Mountbatten. About thirty-five persons, representing active voluntary relief agencies and secretaries of the Government ministries concerned, heard reports of what had been done, what was planned and what could be undertaken for refugee relief. The Chairman did a very fine job in her handling of a very difficult and delicate situation. Her Excellency welcomed all the help possible from overseas, and we assured her we would leave no stone unturned to get help just as quickly, suitably and adequately as possible. Transport, re-inforced foods and warm clothing were the priorities she gave. Supplies on as large a scale as possible must be rushed through quickly.

“ Tragedy, fear and hate brood over India in the wake of freedom. But I would not end on a note of pessimism. India is awake and on the forward march. The shackles of colonial dependence are broken, every man feels a little added stature. Freedom’s first breath has been intoxicating, but soon India will settle down to the realities of constructive and co-operative living and working. As never before she needs the understanding sympathy and active help of all those interested and deeply concerned for her future. India has made unique contributions to humanity’s long upward striving. And after this short fever is over, she will do so again.”

ACTION IN INDIA TO RELIEVE DISTRESS

The killing and wrecking have died down, but a great problem of reconstruction and resettlement remains. The land lies waste. About 8 million refugees, half Moslem, half Sikh and Hindu, have to be resettled and absorbed, a great task for the two Governments. Meanwhile, the camps contain people who are likely prey for disease and whose mental attitude in their idleness is one of resentment, revenge or despair.

The first help was given by hospitals, mission and civil, in the areas affected. Missions have lent medical personnel.

Students have turned to and helped. Both Governments have sent personnel, civil and military, and supplies. In a few camps the refugees have organized sanitation and some form of camp discipline, especially where outside help has given an impetus. There have been some remarkable examples of co-operation. At Ludhiana, where Christian doctors from the hospital were working in the camp, two Moslem doctors handed over their entire medical stocks to the hospital's workers in the camp, and worked there themselves untiringly until they had to leave.

To the National Christian Council of India has fallen the main burden of organizing the work of the Christian community in India for refugees. It is not only a burden, but an immense opportunity of Christian service. The Council has decentralized its relief work. A Christian committee in Lahore organizes the work in West Punjab, and a similar committee in Ludhiana co-ordinates the work throughout East Punjab. Each committee has a budget of Rs.20,000 per month. At Delhi the N.C.C. has its central office for acquiring supplies and dealing with Government. The Government of India has given office space, free storage, exemption from custom duties, free travel for volunteer workers and every possible assistance. The programme of the N.C.C. in relief includes not only medical aid, sanitation and care for health, but recreation and education. Reading rooms have been opened, cinema shows given, the co-operation of schools sought in providing education. This side of the work is vitally important to prevent (or in many cases restore) broken morale.

HELP FROM OUTSIDE INDIA

The Christian community in India has risen magnificently to meet the need of suffering men and women, but it is not a rich community and its work urgently needs help. Medical supplies were flown from American Church World Service to India immediately the need was known, and money and qualified persons are also being sent. On October 24th the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Halifax, Lord Pethick Lawrence, and others issued an appeal for aid for the

Christian relief organizations. It is hoped to raise £6,000 from this country for this fund.¹

The British Red Cross Society² is appealing for funds to supplement the help which it has already sent. It has already expended £25,000 on medical supplies and has devoted the whole of its fund reserved for international work, amounting to £100,000, to relief for the two Dominions.

There is need also for personal help. The Pakistan Government will give free air passages and maintenance to doctors and nurses volunteering from this country. Several have already left. The Government of India with larger resources in untroubled parts of India is using and paying for all available help from within India.

The tragedy has been great and still is, but some words of Lord Mountbatten bear repeating. He said, "Three per cent of the people of the subcontinent are involved. Ninety-seven per cent are living in peace and quietness in their new-found freedom. I ask you to bear that in mind in fairness to these two struggling nations." He was not dismissing the tragedy as a small thing—far from it. He meant that the forces making for peace and order in India are strong enough to resist chaos and, given time and the immediate help they need, to resettle the displaced populations and remove the terrible scars.

THE SUPPLEMENT

Bishop Neill was Bishop of Tinnevely, South India. He is now assistant Bishop to the Archbishop of Canterbury and director of the Study Department of the World Council of Churches.

Kathleen Bliss

¹ Edinburgh House, 2 Eaton Gate, S.W. 1, and Friends House, Euston Road, N.W. 1.

² 14 and 15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W. 1.

CHRISTMAS, 1947

BY BISHOP STEPHEN NEILL

ALMOST everyone in England keeps Christmas in one way or another, but the guess may be hazarded that a good many do so with a certain rueful wistfulness, because Christmas seemed to mean so much more in the past than it does to-day, or with a certain uncomfortable feeling of incongruity, because the way in which it is observed is felt to have so little connection with what Christians throughout the centuries have associated with the day. It is certainly good that children should be given a happy time, that Christmas cards should be sent and old friendships should be renewed, that charity should be exercised towards the needy and forlorn. But could not all this be done equally well at some other time, at New Year's Day, as it is in some countries, or at some other time of the year according to circumstances and national convenience? Why Christmas?

THE CHRISTIAN ERA

The answer to this question must depend on whether we think that there is some real significance in the letters B.C. and A.D. We cut history in two with the birth of Christ. Have we any real right to do so? A recent writer has drawn attention to the interesting fact that it is only since the eighteenth century that this way of reckoning time has become generally current. From a much earlier date, Christians had begun to use the A.D. reckoning, basing it on the calculations made (and wrongly made) by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century. But for events before the birth of Christ, they generally used one of the older forms of reckoning. Our present use, if we consider its meaning deeply, indicates something more than a belief that with the birth of Christ something new came into the world. The birth of Christ works, if we may so say, in two directions. It is that event in the light of which the whole of history finds its significance. All that comes before is part of the preparation for the birth of Christ. All that comes after is

part of the explication, in ever widening circles, of the meaning of Jesus Christ.

The early Christians knew nothing of B.C. and A.D. But the interpretation which we have given of these symbols was perfectly familiar to them. They believed that they were living in the last days, that in Christ God had spoken His final word to the world, and had wrought the great deed by which the world had literally been made new. At first they thought that they were living in the last days, because they believed that God, having spoken this final word, could not have anything important left to do in the world. Even when they came to realize, as they were bound to realize, that they had grievously foreshortened history, and that God still had a great many things to do, they still held fast to their idea of the *Eschaton*, the final event, already past, beyond which there could be no other.

“For God has other words for other worlds.

But for this world the Word of God is Christ.”

There may yet be many conflicts and victories, many new things to be brought out of the treasure-house; but they are all things which find their meaning in the One who has already been revealed.

This position of finality is not congenial to the modern mood. Perhaps it is that, when all things are in flux, we hesitate to fix on any certainty. Perhaps it is so long a time since Christianity first came to us that it has lost its newness, and has come to seem no more than part of a long historical process. Certainly, for those who are still in the midst of their first experience of the Gospel, Christmas comes with a sense of newness (as that which literally cuts life in two), which it is very hard for us to recover.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE

Five years ago, when I woke on Christmas morning, my first thought was of a village where that day for the first time since the creation of the world the Christmas bells would ring out. It was the largest group that I have ever admitted at one time into the Christian Church. The circumstances of their first coming to put themselves under

instruction were not altogether edifying. But they had been long and patiently instructed. They had endured a good deal of opposition from the people round about. They had stood up to the disaster of the sudden death of their leading man, an event of course interpreted by all their neighbours as a sign of the anger of the old gods at their desertion. Early on in their preparation, they had broken down with their own hands the idol shrine just outside the village (an act calling, in my opinion, for greater courage than that of St. Martin of Tours on a famous and similar occasion) and presented to me the spear and bells and gold ornaments which had been used in the temple-worship. Then they built with their own hands their first church, a bare building with mud walls and palm leaf roof, perhaps thirty feet by eighteen, and just large enough to accommodate two hundred and fifty people sitting tight packed on the floor. Then came the day of their baptism, a long, long service that went on all one afternoon, until the whole village had been brought, at least outwardly, within the Christian society. And so to the first Christmas. I knew that the bell would have been rung about three in the morning, and that long before the first streak of light the whole village would have been assembled in the church to sing, tunelessly and inexpertly, the Tamil lyrics in honour of the birth of Christ.

To such a group, the coming of Christ does mean the sharpest possible division of life into two, before and after, their particular B.C. and A.D. They would have found it very difficult, if challenged, to say exactly what had happened to them, but their answer would probably have been much on the lines of the German hymn :—

“I lay in cruel bondage,

Thou camest and madest me free.”

We do not believe much in evil spirits. It is most difficult to enter sympathetically into the minds of those whose whole life is ruled by their belief in them, and to whom almost every day's experience yields clear and authentic proof of the power and malevolence of the spirit world.

“Our life was passed in fear of the spirits. Now Christ has

come and it is all different. Of course we still believe in the spirits, and probably some of the women still go off quietly and make offerings to them. But now we know that that is not the last word. Now Christ is our Master, and He is a kind master." That, I think, is the kind of thing they would say, and I am almost sure that that last phrase would come into it: He is a kind Master. It is so strange to know and be sure that the last word about the world is not spoken by its stern and inhospitable aspect, but that behind all that there is the ultimate kindness. If you have come out of that world of fear, it is not likely that you will willingly go back; all things have become new.

There is a sharpness and directness in primitive experience which is dulled by the intellectualizing processes of civilization. But it is clear that, unless Christmas means to us much the same as it meant to those simple Tamil people in the year 1 of their new era, it is not meaning to us what it did to the Christians of the great age of the Church.

THE MEANING OF THE INCARNATION

The doctrine of the Incarnation is that, in the birth of Jesus Christ, God Himself became the experiencing subject of a human experience. No one except myself, not even God, can experience my experience. The most sympathetic observation is not the same as experience. The great Christmas hymns say nothing else than this—that God had chosen to know man's experience from within, and that, because there is no other way by which such experience can be gained, He Himself became man. If we do not believe this, we can no doubt still keep Christmas with gratitude and joy; but not with the feelings of the Christian who is reduced to almost speechless astonishment by the spectacle of

"Our God contracted to a span
Incomprehensibly made man."

It is essential to realize at the outset that the doctrine of the Incarnation is not primarily a doctrine about a man named Jesus, it is a doctrine about the God who made the

worlds. What is that God like? The Christian answer is that He is a God who cares, a God who cares so much that no human imagination can put a limit to His caring. The Bible picture of God is of One who has every right to cast off this world, because of its arrogant and continual rebellion against Himself, who could, if He would, blot out this marred world and make it all afresh and much fairer; and yet who will never cast off this world because He is faithful, because He has made a covenant with men, and man's unfaithfulness does not set Him free from the obligation He has taken upon Himself to be the God of man.

Some readers, having come to this point, may say: "Well, that may be all very true in theology, but does it make any difference in practice?" It seems to me that what I think about what happened on Christmas Day does make a very great difference every time I say my prayers. Naturally, in these winter days, a good part of one's prayers is concerned with those to whom winter is a time of terror, the cold and hungry and homeless, the forsaken and the forlorn. To whom is one speaking about them? If the Christian message is true, then I have no need to explain to Him what it is I am talking about, because He knows it all already, not by the power of an omnipotence which understands everything from outside, but because He has Himself experienced it all. He has chosen to know the experience of finding no room in the inn, of being poor and despised and forlorn and helpless and despairing. It is the certainty that we are not speaking to One who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities which gives its intimacy and its confidence to Christian prayer.

CHRISTMAS IN A TIME OF TROUBLES

But especially at Christmas, if the Christian message is true, I know how Christmas ought to be kept. Part of our difficulty in keeping it is that it has been so much associated with pictures of tranquillity and prosperity, good cheer and the absence of anxiety, that we can hardly contain our feeling of resentment at the contrast between what Christmas is supposed to stand for and the grim realities

of our world. But our resentment ought to be directed not against Christmas, but against a human and natural distortion of it. It brings a message not for the days of prosperity, but for tragic times. Jesus Himself was under no illusions as to the kind of world into which He was speaking His message, and as to the kind of world it would continue to be. It is good that the Church appoints for our reading in Advent some of those passages which speak of wars and rumours of wars, distress of nations and men's hearts failing them for fear. These were not the things that came before the birth of Christ ; they are things which He foresaw as the continuing background to the work and witness of His people. His Church is to live in the perpetual tension of a great conflict ; it is uncertain whether when He comes He will find faith upon the earth. The prospect leaves Him undismayed ; these things are not outside the control of His heavenly Father, they are the conditions under which the will of God is to be worked out.

We may well be perplexed that God should have chosen to go on working in such a world, and that He has appointed so terribly long a span of time between the first speaking of His word in Christ, and the fulfilment of that word of promise in whatever it is that He has appointed for the fulness of the times. But here is the faith and patience of the saints. It is not for us to question the times and seasons which God has put in His own keeping. Our task is to hold on, recognizing the time in which we live, and the nature of God's working in it.

For the Christian, the nature of the time in which He lives is determined by Christmas and its message. It is a time at the beginning of which God spoke His final word to men in Christ. To a large extent that word is still a hidden word, and there is therefore both a looking backward and a looking forward. But the word has already been spoken, the kingdom of God is already here. The decisive act has happened, by which the world is both judged and saved.

Our Christmas Day this year is likely to be one of anxiety and anguish of spirit, as the world plunges forward into apparently irredeemable confusion. But the Christmas

message rightly understood brings to us the confidence and cheer without which it is difficult to go on living at all in such a world. We might think that God had forsaken His world. Christmas assures us that He will not leave it, because He has not left it, because He cannot leave it, since in the birth of Jesus He has bound it to Himself in such a way that the travail and anguish of the world is part of His own life. It tells us that God cannot be defeated, because He has not been defeated, because in Jesus He has shown us that His power is great enough to bring the resounding victory of the ages out of the most absolute defeat. It tells us that God still intends to save the world, but that He will save it only in one way, from within and by the help of man. The meaning of the Incarnation is that God will do nothing for man without the co-operation of man, and that all that tends to the world's salvation, though in its origin it comes *from* God only, can come only *through* man. In that work of redeeming the world, He still calls for the co-operation of men, without whom He can do nothing. But they must be men of a certain kind. His message is still the same as it always was, but it comes home to-day with a special poignancy: "Peace on earth to men of goodwill." We can be sharers in the joy of Christmas, even in the darkest days, but only on condition that we put ourselves in such an attitude towards God as makes us eligible to share it. But perhaps the other rendering of the Greek is the right one after all: "Peace on earth to men in whom He is well pleased," to men on whom His gracious favour rests. And, in spite of all that men have done, that phrase is of universal application. If there is one thing certain about Christmas, it is that Christ was born for all men. His birth is the permanent assurance that all men are still within God's covenant of goodwill, and that there is no one excluded from the range of His gracious favour, no one at all who is debarred from the possibility of co-operation with God.

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